

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held October 12, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Lucas Herring at 7:00 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Jake Hemmerick; from Ward II, Councilor Michael Boutin; and from Ward III, Councilors Ericka Reil and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Steve Mackenzie, Finance Director Dawn Monahan, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron, BCS Assistant Director (Recreation) Stephanie Quaranta, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: From Ward II; Councilor Teddy Waszazak.

Adjustments to the Agenda: Councilor Hemmerick asked that the consent agenda item related to the Bike-Ped Complete Street Planning Grant be taken separately, as he will need to recuse himself from the discussion and decision.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Council approved the following consent agenda items on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried.**

- A. Minutes of the following meetings:
 1. Regular meeting of September 28, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Ratification of Week 2021-40, dated October 6, 2021
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$2,095,429.69
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$124,962.75
 2. Approval of Week 2021-41, dated October 13, 2021:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$1,541,563.93
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$127,608.81
- C. 2021 Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Ratify Authorization of BOR Roof Repair Contract.
- E. Authorize Planning Director (Planning Commission) to Apply for a Bike-Ped Complete Streets Planning Grant. (ITEM DEFERRED TO SEPARATE ACTION BELOW)
- F. Authorize Elks Club Donation to Fire Department.

Councilor Hemmerick recused himself from the following discussion and decision.

Council approved authorizing the Planning Director (Planning Commission) to apply for a Bike-Ped Complete Streets Planning Grant on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Reil.

Motion carried, with Councilor Hemmerick recused.

The City Clerk/Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Accepting applications for the VT COVID Arrearage Assistance Program 2 through October 24th. Have received \$30,000+ to date, with \$17,000+ in outstanding requests. The program assists in payment of delinquent water/sewer bills through federal COVID relief funds.

Liquor Control – NONE

City Manager's Report - Manager Mackenzie said there was nothing to add to his written report.

Visitors and Communications – NONE

Old Business –

A) Merchant’s Row Master Plan Update.

Manager Mackenzie said review of the master plan indicates changes over the last several years now make this an impractical part of the TIF plan. There are no longer anticipated private development projects tied to Merchant’s Row that would generate increment sufficient to support a new TIF bond. The Manager said improvements will be made to the area, however they won’t be funded through TIF.

New Business –

A) Committee Appointments.

Svetlana Zhexembeyeva shared her past experience and interest in serving on the Diversity and Equity Committee. Council approved her appointment on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

B) Washington County Substance Abuse Regional Partnership.

Dr. Mark Depman and Eva Zaret from the Central Vermont Prevention Coalition, and Ann Gilbert from Central Vermont New Directions, spoke of their collaborative work on the three-year federal grant primarily focused on substance abuse prevention. Dr. Depman said they are partners with the medical center, Justice Center, People’s Health & Wellness, Recovery House, and Turning Point Center. They were excited to see a community center identified as one of the key goals coming out of the All In For Barre community visit, as community involvement is integral to prevention success. Ms. Zaret reviewed results from a youth risk behavior survey of Barre Unified Union School District students, which asked questions around alcohol and substance use, and access to protective factors. There was discussion on funding sources, importance of family involvement, and money saved for every dollar spent on prevention. Mayor Herring invited the Coalition to return for another update in 4-6 months.

C) BCS/Recreation Department Update and FY23 Budget Review.

Buildings and Community Services director Jeff Bergeron reviewed cemetery revenues, saying they’ve seen an increase in lot sales. Mr. Bergeron said Barre Youth Services is no longer running the concessions stand at the BOR, at least through next year. There was discussion on other options for offering concessions. Mr. Bergeron talked about staffing and workloads, and said his projected FY23 budget includes an additional staff person. There was discussion on full-time and seasonal staffing, vandalism in City Hall Park, removal of trees, and repairs to the BOR roof. Mr. Bergeron said he inventories building conditions with a facility evaluation form, and there is a need for an overall engineering survey of the roofing system at the BOR. He said the Civic Center Committee is active in identifying maintenance needs throughout the center’s facilities.

BCS assistant director (recreation) Stephanie Quaranta spoke of staffing changes over the years, and noted the only recreation staff these days is part-time summer and winter help, in addition to her full-time position. Ms. Quaranta said the City received a Summer Matters for All grant, which helped cover summer staffing costs this year, and subsidized pool passes. She noted the numbers of people who used the pool this year, and said there was a change in demographics among users. There was discussion on services provided to Barre Town residents, the summer meal and snack programs, promoting additional usage of the Civic Center facilities, and recreation programming for youth.

Councilor Hemmerick left the meeting at this point at 9:15 PM.

D) Planning, Permitting and Assessing Dept. Update and FY23 Budget Preview/Review.

Planning Director Janet Shatney reviewed her draft FY23 budget, and noted projected increases in permit

revenues. She noted the staffing vacancies in her department, where the City is looking for a full-time assessor and a full-time permit administrator. The assessor who recently accepted withdrew from the position due to a recent accident. Ms. Shatney said there is a new position for a junior planner in her FY23 budget, and an increase in the grant match line, which will make these funds available to other departments who need matching money. There was discussion on the open positions, and posting employment opportunities on the City website.

Round Table –

Councilor Boutin said the Council should review the burdens its placing on staff, especially with the creation of new committees.

Councilor Stockwell said the Council should prioritize committees.

Mayor Herring spoke of the difficulties municipalities and other sectors are having in filling staffing vacancies. The Mayor reminded everyone that the third step of the All In For Barre community visit is scheduled for October 20th, beginning at 6:30 PM at the auditorium.

Executive Session –

Mayor Herring said there will be an executive session for Council to consider the City Manager's 6-month review. Councilor Cambel made the motion to find that premature general knowledge of the personnel issue to be discussed would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 9:42 PM to discuss personnel under the provisions of 1 VSA §313 on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

Council came out of executive session at 10:02 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

There was no action.

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 PM on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk